DC
BAT MAN
NOCTURNA MEANS NIGHTMARE!
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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
THE NEW
THERE'S NO STOPPING US NOW.

BAT MAN
CREATED BY BOB KANE
FOR GROWN MAN AS WELL AS YOUNG BOY, THE LURE OF DARKNESS CANNOT BE DENIED...
JASONNN!!
PALE NOCTURNA IS THE DARKNESS.
THE SLAYER OF NIGHT

DOUG MOENCH WRITER / DON NEWTON & ALFREDO ALCALA ARTISTS / ALCALA & ODA LETTERERS / ADRIENNE ROY COLORIST / LEN WEIN EDITOR

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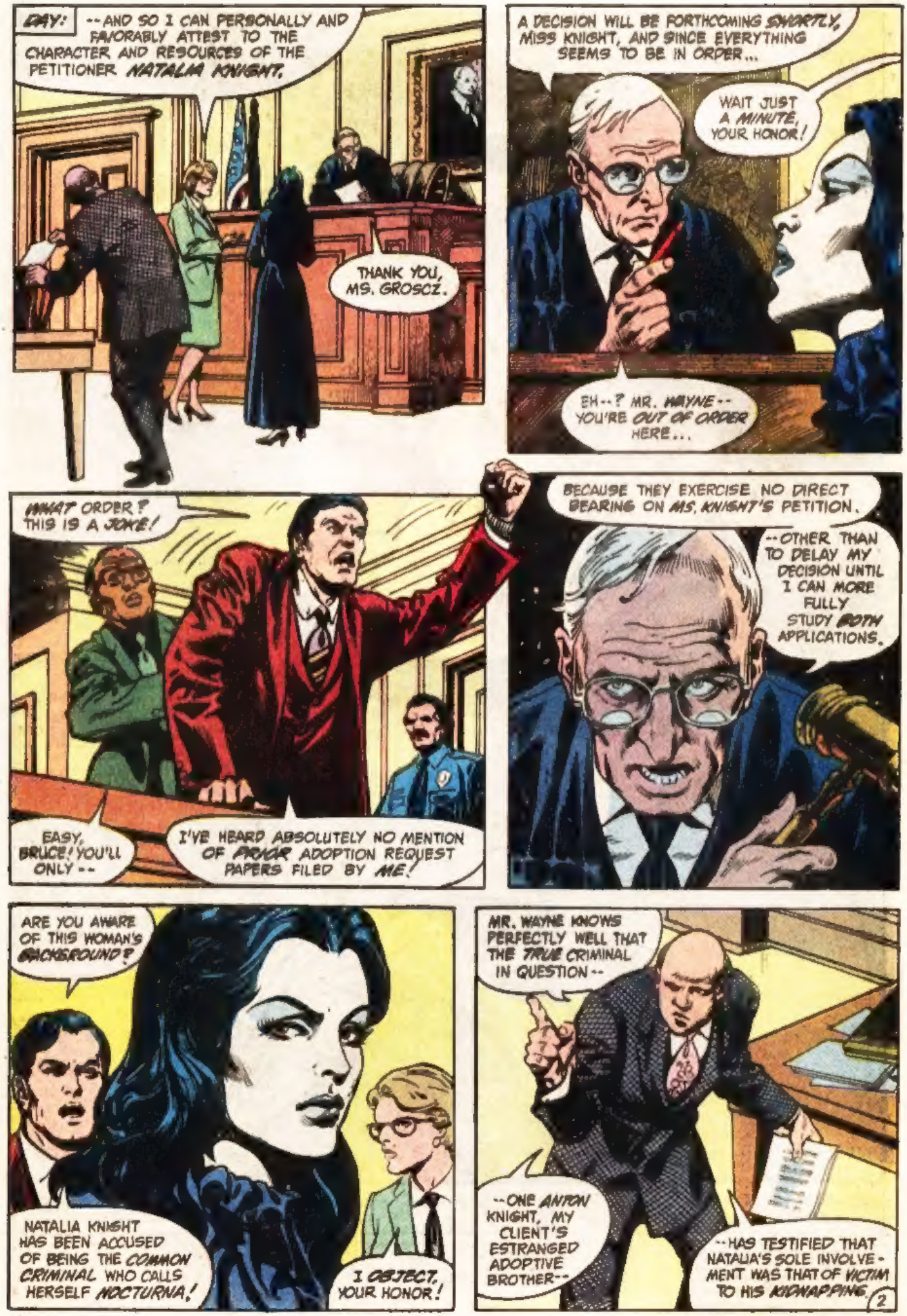
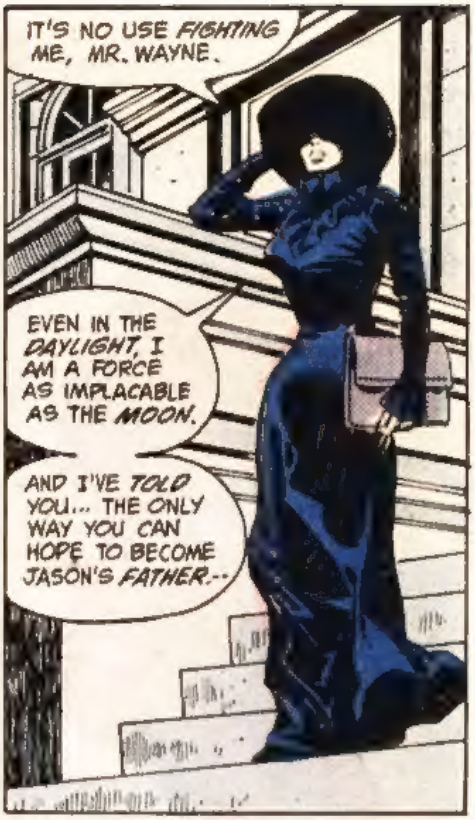
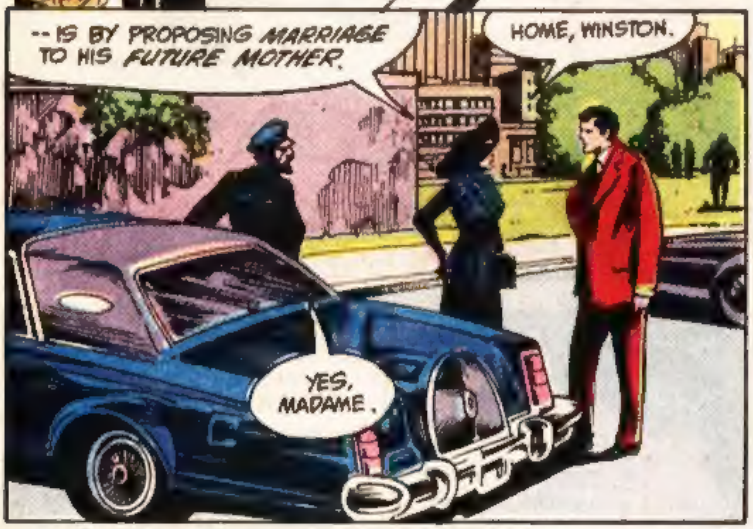

JAY: --AND SO I CAN PERSONALLY AND FAVORABLY ATTEST TO THE CHARACTER AND RESOURCES OF THE PETITIONER NATALIA KNIGHT.
THANK YOU, MS. GROSCZ.
A DECISION WILL BE FORTHCOMING SHORTLY, MISS KNIGHT, AND SINCE EVERYTHING SEEMS TO BE IN ORDER...
WAIT JUST A MINUTE, YOUR HONOR!
EH--? MR. WAYNE-- YOU'RE OUT OF ORDER HERE...
WHAT ORDER? THIS IS A JOKE!
EASY, BRUCE! YOU'LL ONLY --
I'VE HEARD ABSOLUTELY NO MENTION OF PRIOR ADOPTION REQUEST PAPERS FILED BY ME!
BECAUSE THEY EXERCISE NO DIRECT BEARING ON MS. KNIGHT'S PETITION.
--OTHER THAN TO DELAY MY DECISION UNTIL I CAN MORE FULLY STUDY BOTH APPLICATIONS.
ARE YOU AWARE OF THIS WOMAN'S BACKGROUND?
NATALIA KNIGHT HAS BEEN ACCUSED OF BEING THE COMMON CRIMINAL WHO CALLS HERSELF NOCTURNA!
I OBJECT, YOUR HONOR!
MR. WAYNE KNOWS PERFECTLY WELL THAT THE TRUE CRIMINAL IN QUESTION --
--ONE ANTON KNIGHT, MY CLIENT'S ESTRANGED ADOPTIVE BROTHER--
--HAS TESTIFIED THAT NATALIA'S SOLE INVOLVEMENT WAS THAT OF VICTIM TO HIS KIDNAPPING.
2

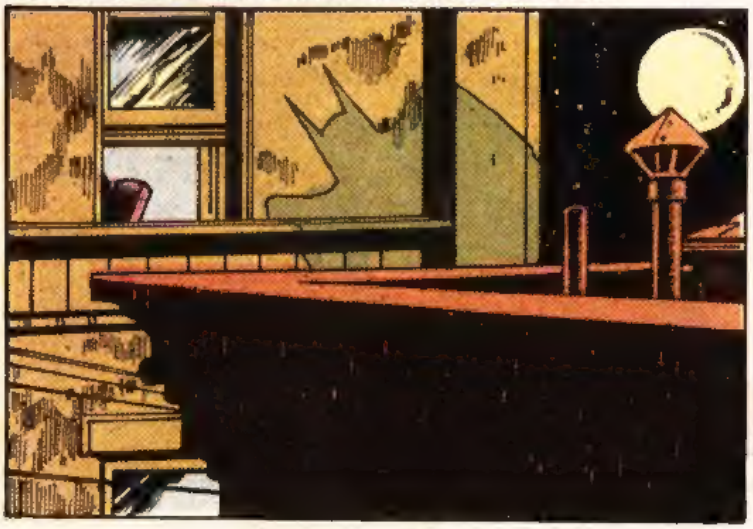
HE SAID THAT ONLY TO PROTECT HER-- BECAUSE HE LOVED HER!
BUT A PERSONAGE NO LESS THAN THE BATMAN HIMSELF TESTIFIED--
YES, YES, MR. WAYNE...
... BUT EVEN EMPLOYING THE WELL-KNOWN AND HIGHLY IRREGULAR METHODS OF A LAWLESS VIGILANTE, THE BATMAN WAS UNABLE TO PRODUCE A SINGLE SHRED OF CONCRETE EVIDENCE.
NOW, THAT WILL BE QUITE ENOU--
BUT DON'T YOU SEE?! SHE KNOWS HOW WEALTHY I AM!
BRUCE! CALM, DOWN, BRUCE!
EXIT
SHE'S ONLY DOING THIS TO GET CLOSE TO MY MONEY-- BECAUSE IN THE END SHE KNOWS I'LL HAVE TO GAIN CUSTODY OF JASON!
I FOR ONE AM NOT CONVINCED THAT YOU WILL GAIN CUSTODY OF ANYONE, MR. WAYNE.
AND I'VE HEARD MORE THAN ENOUGH OF YOUR ABSURDLY WILD FANTASIES!
DOESN'T JASON HAVE ANY SAY ABOUT HIS FUTURE? HAS ANYONE ASKED HOW HE FEELS ABOUT BEING ADOPTED BY NATALIA KNIGHT?
OF COURSE WE HAVE, AND HIS RESPONSE WAS KEEN APPROVAL -- EVEN EAGERNESS.
WHA--?
THIS HEARING IS CONCLUDED, AND YOU ARE FORTUNATE, MR. WAYNE, TO ESCAPE CONTEMPT.
3

OUTSIDE, THE SUN IS OFFENSIVELY BRIGHT.
EASY, BRUCE... DON'T LOSE YOUR COOL, BUT SHE'S COMING THIS WAY...
THE JUDGE WAS HOSTILE, LUCIUS.
IT STINKS-- SOMEONE'S GOTTEN TO HIM, I KNOW IT!
BUT WHO COULD--


IT'S NO USE FIGHTING ME, MR. WAYNE.
EVEN IN THE DAYLIGHT, I AM A FORCE AS IMPLACABLE AS THE MOON.
AND I'VE TOLD YOU... THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN HOPE TO BECOME JASON'S FATHER--



NIGHT: THE GOTHAM BUREAU OF CHILD WELFARE...



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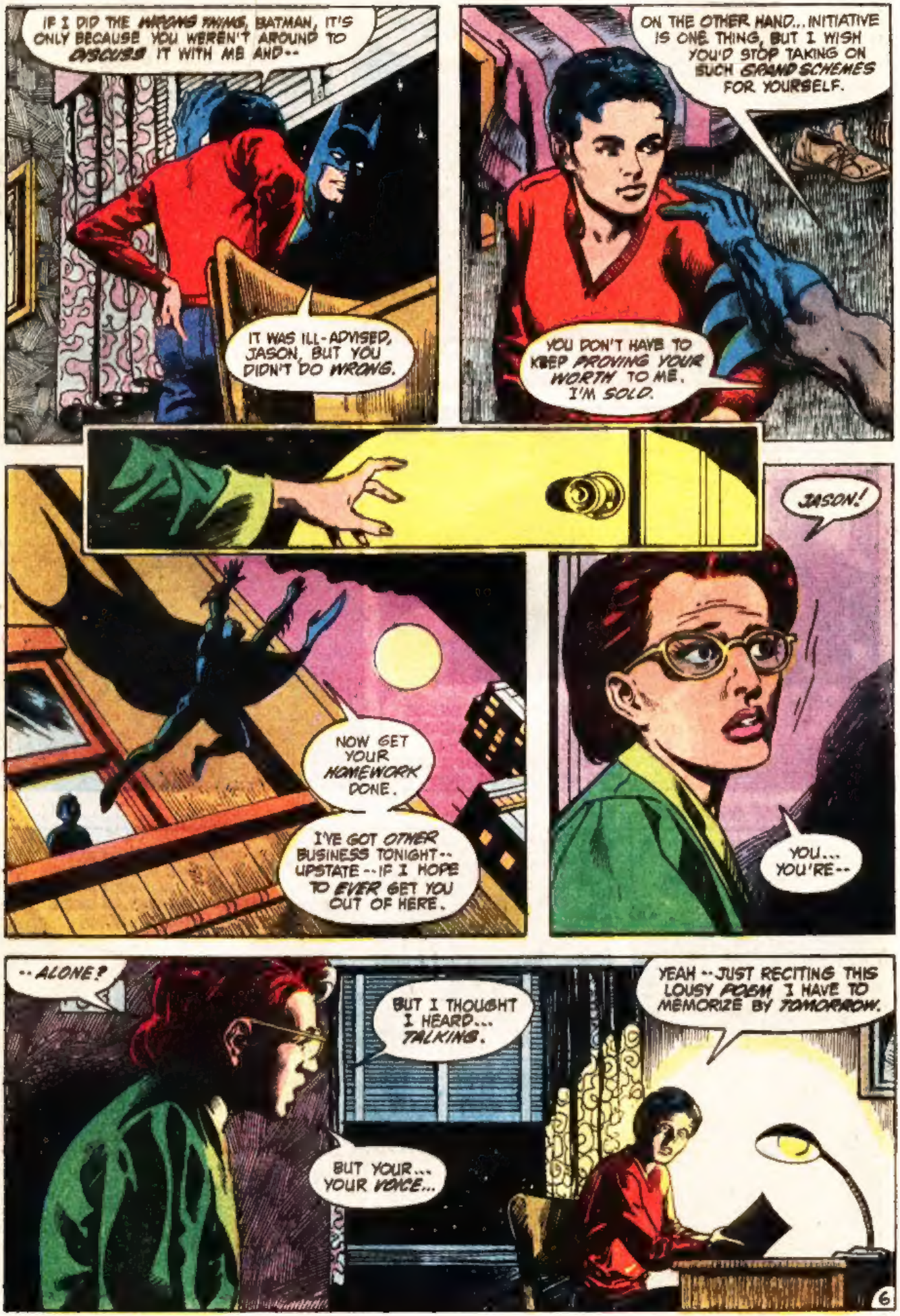
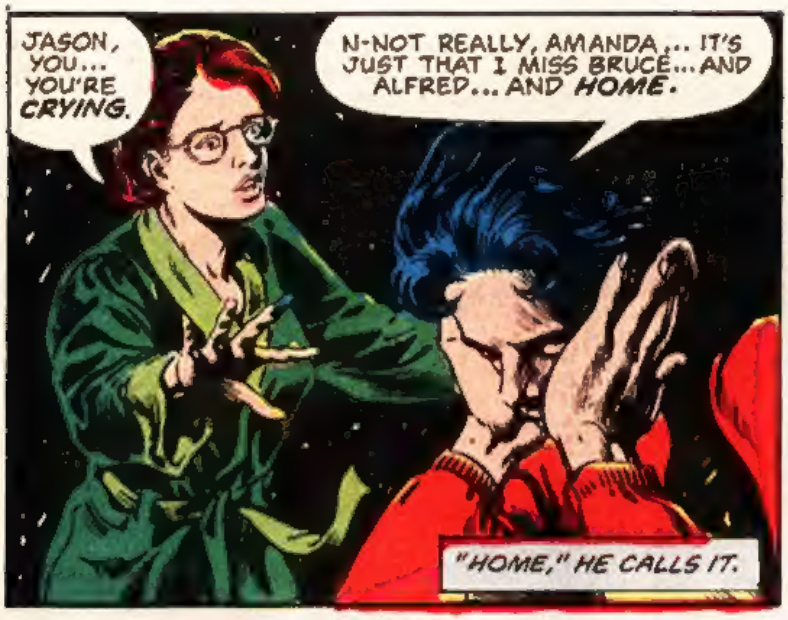
BATMAN! BOY, ARE YOU A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES! I'M GOIN' CRAZY IN THIS PLACE!
I'VE BEEN SO TEMPTED TO JUST PUT ON MY ROBIN OUTFIT AND--
ANSWER ME, JASON.
OKAY, SURE.
THE WAY I FIGURE IT, SEE, IS THAT SINCE YOU KNOW AND I KNOW THAT NATALIA KNIGHT IS REALLY NOCTURNA, THE BEST WAY TO CONVINCE THE REST OF THE WORLD IS FOR ME TO GET THE GOODS ON HER FROM THE INSIDE.
WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOU DON'T LIKE MY PLAN?
JASON ... IN TRYING TO AID THE BATMAN'S FIGHT AGAINST NOCTURNA, YOU MAY HAVE SERIOUSLY DAMAGED BRUCE WAYNE'S CHANCES AGAINST NATALIA KNIGHT.
YEAH-- BUT THAT'S WHAT I WAS TRYING TO DO.
ONCE I'VE EXPOSED NATALIA AS NOCTURNA--
--THEY'LL HAVE TO TAKE ME AWAY FROM HER-- AND THEN THEY'LL GIVE ME TO YOU--TO BRUCE.
AMANDA GROSCZ IS WELL AWARE THAT UNTIL JASON TODD'S ADOPTION IS SETTLED, HIS SAFETY REMAINS IN HER CHARGE.
IT IS NOW SHADING ON MIDNIGHT, AND AMANDA HAS HEARD SUSPICIOUS SOUNDS ...
5

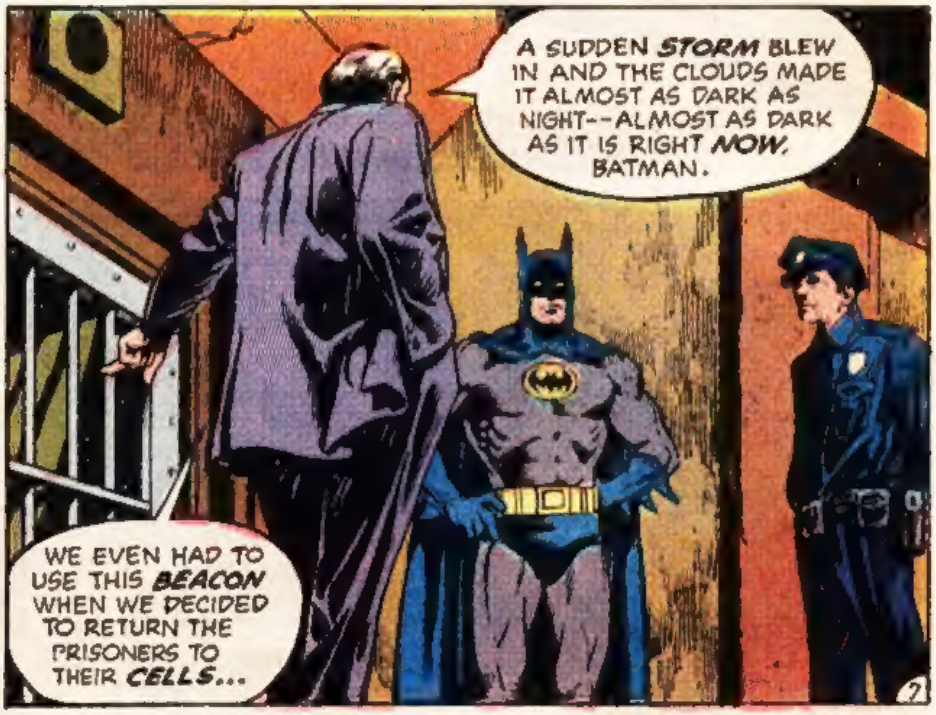

IF I DID THE WRONG THING, BATMAN, IT'S ONLY BECAUSE YOU WEREN'T AROUND TO DISCUSS IT WITH ME AND--
IT WAS ILL-ADVISED, JASON, BUT YOU DIDN'T DO WRONG.
ON THE OTHER HAND... INITIATIVE IS ONE THING, BUT I WISH YOU'D STOP TAKING ON SUCH GRAND SCHEMES FOR YOURSELF.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO KEEP PROVING YOUR WORTH TO ME. I'M SOLD.
NOW GET YOUR HOMEWORK DONE.
I'VE GOT OTHER BUSINESS TONIGHT-- UPSTATE--IF I HOPE TO EVER GET YOU OUT OF HERE.
JASON!
YOU... YOU'RE--
--ALONE?
BUT I THOUGHT I HEARD... TALKING.
BUT YOUR... YOUR VOICE...
YEAH--JUST RECITING THIS LOUSY POEM I HAVE TO MEMORIZE BY TOMORROW.
6



COULD IT BE THAT BRUCE WAYNE ISN'T SUCH A POOR GUARDIAN? UNUSUAL, YES, BUT IF HE INSPIRES SO MUCH DEVOTION, PERHAPS THERE'S MORE TO THIS RELATIONSHIP THAN MEETS THE EYE...

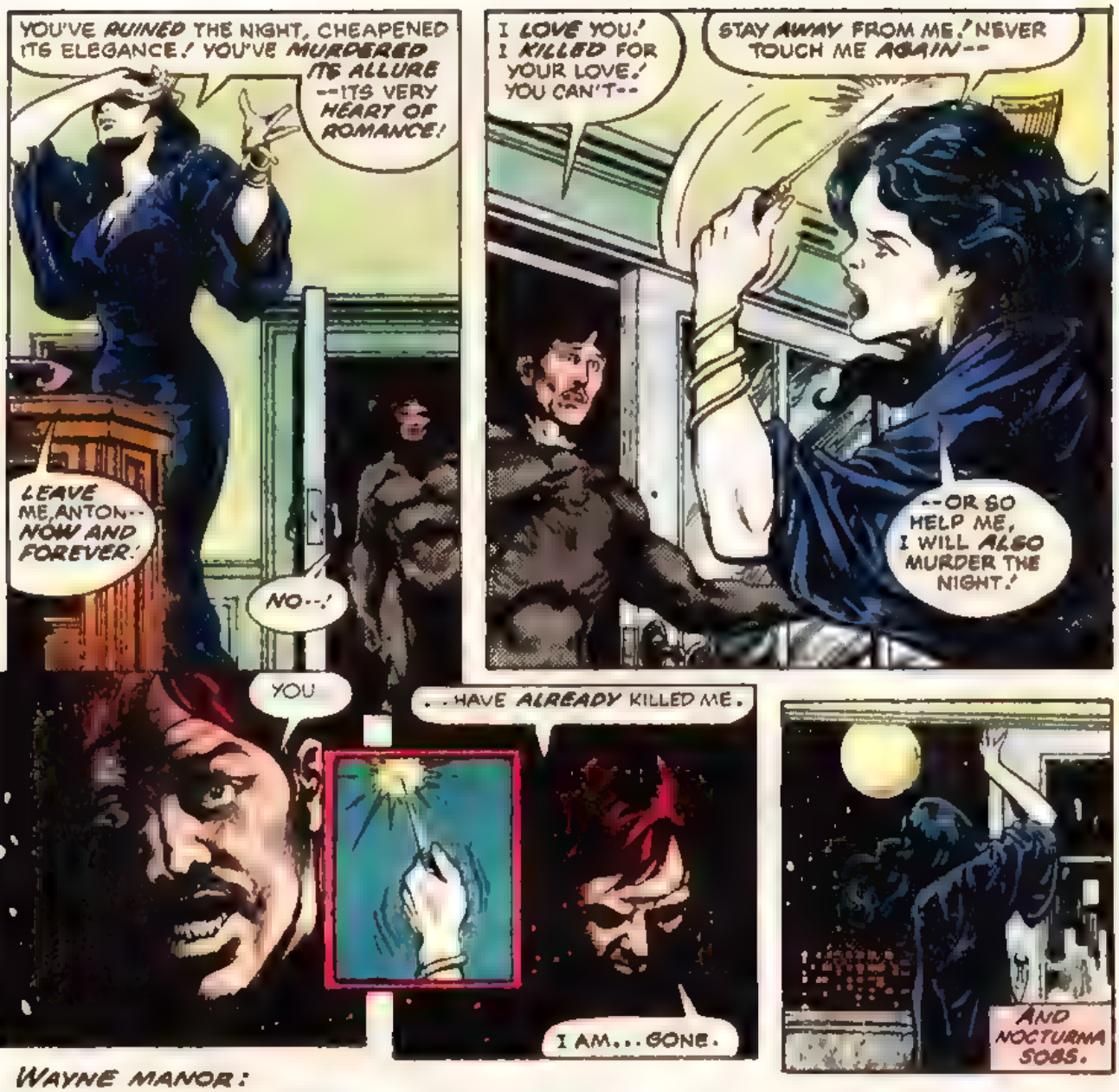
BUT THEN... WHY DID YOU SAY YOU WANTED TO BE ADOPTED BY MS. KNIGHT?
B-BECAUSE YOU HATE BRUCE AND YOU'LL NEVER LET ME GO BACK TO HIM AND BECAUSE NATALIA'S NICE AND... AND I JUST WANT TO GET OUT OF HERE.

THE UPSTATE PENITENTIARY:

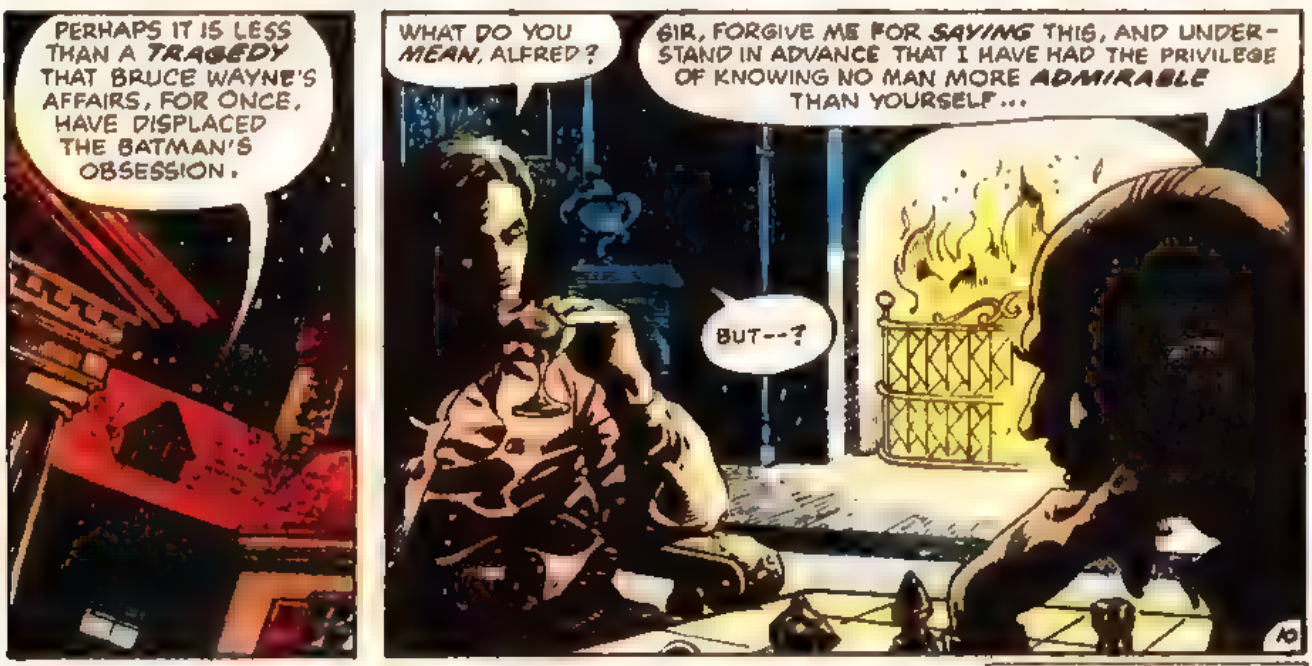

A SUDDEN STORM BLEW IN AND THE CLOUDS MADE IT ALMOST AS DARK AS NIGHT--ALMOST AS DARK AS IT IS RIGHT NOW, BATMAN.
WE EVEN HAD TO USE THIS BEACON WHEN WE DECIDED TO RETURN THE PRISONERS TO THEIR CELLS...

BUT WHEN WE TOOK INVENTORY, WE DISCOVERED THAT ONE OF THE INMATES WAS MISSING -- ANTON KNIGHT.
IT WAS AS IF HE'D SOMEHOW BECOME PART OF THE GLOOM AND SIMPLY DISAPPEARED.
THEN IT WAS THE NIGHT-THIEF WHO MURDERED STURGES HELLSTROM ON EMPIRE ISLAND... MAKING HIM NOW A SLAYER OF NIGHT...
AND IF HE'S BACK IN GOTHAM, HE'S CERTAIN TO BE WITH--
NOCTURNA BREATHES THE BLACK WIND OF HER PENTHOUSE BALCONY ATOP THE RITZ-CARLTON HOTEL.
HER GHOSTLY SKIN REFLECTS THE MOONLIGHT IN MATED MOOD.
AND SO ANOTHER NIGHT'S MYSTERY PASSES UNTOUCHED BY MAGIC'S CARESS.
I STAND ALONE IN SWEET DARKNESS...MOURNING THE ABSENCE OF LOVE...
...OF HIM WHO BEST EMBODIES THE FORBIDDEN GIFTS MIDNIGHT EVER OFFERS...
WEEP IN DARKNESS NO LONGER, NOCTURNA.
8

ANTON--?
CAN IT TRULY BE--?
SHADOWS NEVER DECEIVE, NOCTURNA...
...AND I HAVE STOLEN THROUGH THE NIGHT THAT OURS MAY AGAIN ENTWINE.
THEN DARK ELEGANCE IS ONCE MORE OURS FOR THE TAKING, ANTON!
ALL THAT REMAINS IS TO SEVER MY TEMPORARY PARTNERSHIP WITH STURGES HELLSTROM, AND--
IT WON'T BE NECESSARY, NOCTURNA--HELLSTROM IS ALREADY OUT OF THE WAY.
WHAT... DO YOU MEAN, ANTON?
WHEN I LEARNED HE WAS TRYING TO MAKE LOVE TO YOU, I ELIMINATED HIM.
YOU... YOU MURDERED HIM? YOU SPILLED BLOOD IN THE NIGHT... AND YOU STILL HOPE TO BE MY LOVER?
WE CHOSE THE DARK PATH LONG AGO, NOCTURNA. WHY ARE YOU SO--
NO! I CHOSE THE NIGHT, ANTON! I CHOSE TO STEAL WEALTH AND ELEGANCE FROM THE SHADOWS, YES. BUT NOT DEATH--NEVER MURDER!
9


YOU'VE RUINED THE NIGHT, CHEAPENED ITS ELEGANCE! YOU'VE MURDERED ITS ALLURE --ITS VERY HEART OF ROMANCE!
LEAVE ME, ANTON-- NOW AND FOREVER!
NO--!
I LOVE YOU! I KILLED FOR YOUR LOVE! YOU CAN'T--
STAY AWAY FROM ME! NEVER TOUCH ME AGAIN--
--OR SO HELP ME, I WILL ALSO MURDER THE NIGHT!
YOU
..HAVE ALREADY KILLED ME.
I AM...GONE.
AND NOCTURNA SOBS.

WAYNE MANOR:


PERHAPS IT IS LESS THAN A TRAGEDY THAT BRUCE WAYNE'S AFFAIRS, FOR ONCE, HAVE DISPLACED THE BATMAN'S OBSESSION.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, ALFRED?
SIR, FORGIVE ME FOR SAYING THIS, AND UNDERSTAND IN ADVANCE THAT I HAVE HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF KNOWING NO MAN MORE ADMIRABLE THAN YOURSELF...
BUT--?
40

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BUT... WELL, SIR... AS MUCH AS GOTHAM COULD NOT SURVIVE WITHOUT THE BATMAN... I DOUBT THE BATMAN COULD SURVIVE WITHOUT BRUCE WAYNE.
HAVE I BEEN NEGLECTING MY PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS THAT MUCH, ALFRED?
CERTAINLY NOT WITH ME, SIR, AND NOT REALLY WITH YOUNG JASON--BUT INSOFAR AS THE BATMAN MUST TAKE UP MUCH OF YOUR TIME, IT IS INEVITABLE THAT BRUCE WAYNE'S AFFAIRS SHOULD SUFFER TO A CERTAIN EXTENT.
YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH MISS VALE, IN PARTICULAR--
YES, I KNOW I'VE BEEN NEGLECTING VICKI--BUT EVER SINCE TAKING ON JASON, MY TIME HAS BEEN--
I FULLY UNDERSTAND, SIR, AND WITH LUCK, SO DOES MISS VALE... BUT MY MEANING GOES BEYOND SUCH DETAILS, HOWEVER IMPORTANT THEY MAY BE.
AND IN THE LARGER SENSE...?
BY HIS VERY NATURE, SIR, AND NECESSARILY TO ENSURE HIS SUCCESS, THE BATMAN IS A... A CREATURE OF BUT ONE OVERRIDING EMOTION...
SUPREME OUTRAGE.
HIS CONSUMING NEED FOR JUSTICE AND RETRIBUTION IS THE VERY FACTOR WHICH ENCOURAGES HIS SUCCESS.
THEREFORE BRUCE WAYNE REPRESENTS YOUR POSITIVE SIDE...
...THE FULL SPECTRUM OF ALL YOUR OTHER EMOTIONS.
AND I SHOULD PAY MORE ATTENTION TO THOSE OTHER EMOTIONS--EVEN WHEN I'M NOT FORCED TO, AS IN THE CURRENT CRISIS INVOLVING JASON?
IT MAY BE SELFISH OF ME, SIR...
11

...BUT I WAS NEVER MORE PROUD OF YOU THAN WHEN YOU MOMENTARILY IGNORED THE BAT-SIGNAL TO CONCENTRATE ON JASON'S PLIGHT.
AND AS AN IRONIC RESULT, BOTH JASON AND BULLOCK WERE ALMOST KILLED.
I ADMIT THERE IS THAT LESSON TO BE LEARNED AS WELL, SIR... BUT THE BATMAN TRULY IS A CREATURE TO BE FEARED--EVEN BY YOURSELF IN THE DARK CORNERS OF YOUR OWN SOUL.
THE FIRE SPARKS LOUDLY.
WITHOUT BRUCE WAYNE'S COMPASSION TO BALANCE THE BATMAN'S OBSESSION...I FEAR THE NIGHT-CREATURE WOULD DEVOUR YOUR VERY HEART.
ACROSS TOWN:
THIS IS OUR SECOND DATE, VICKI, NOT THE FIRST...
...WON'T I EVER GET A KISS?
I... I'M SORRY, BILL, BUT... NOT YET...
AND IT'S ONLY FAIR TO WARN YOU... WE MAY NEVER KISS.
BRUCE WAYNE?
BUT VICKI VALE SAYS NOTHING, TURNING TO A WINDOW ON THE TROUBLED AND CONFUSING NIGHT.
12

THE PICTURE NEWS BUILDING:
I SEE YOU'RE STILL HERE, JULIA, BUT VICKI SEEMS TO HAVE KICKED THE HABIT OF WORKING LATE. HOT ROMANCE?
WE CAN ONLY HOPE, FRANKIE.
WELL, GUESS I'LL JUST LEAVE THIS STUFF ON HER DESK...
HERE--I'LL TAKE IT.
THANKS, JULIA-- AND TRY TO GET SOME SLEEP, HUH?
I WILL, IF MY DREAMS WILL LET ME.
EH--? IN THAT OPEN DRAWER...SOME PICTURES...
OF BRUCE... THEY'RE ALL SHOTS OF BRUCE WAYNE...
AND SEEN BY JULIA IN A NEW LIGHT--THROUGH THE EYES OF A WOMAN IN LOVE.
SEVEN MINUTES LATER, WHEN JULIA FINALLY LEAVES THE OFFICE--
--IT IS AS A THIEF.
13
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THE BATCAVE!
ALFRED'S RIGHT-- I'VE GOT TO FIGHT NATALIA KNIGHT AS BRUCE WAYNE... BECAUSE AS THE BATMAN, I'M DANGEROUSLY OBSESSED WITH NOCTURNA.
GOD HELP ME, BUT I EVEN FIND HER INTRIGUING... ALMOST LIKE A DRUG I NEED TO SURVIVE...
...LIKE THE NIGHT ITSELF.
I'VE GOT TO STAY AWAY FROM HER-- SEE HER ONLY IN THE DAYTIME-- IN COURT--AND AS BRUCE WAYNE...
...NOT NOW AT NIGHT... AS THE BATMAN...
AND YET SHE'S A CRIMINAL... AND HER ESCAPED LOVER IS NOW A MURDERER...AND IF THE BATMAN DOES NOTHING ABOUT THAT, THE BRUCE WAYNE IS LESS THAN HE SHOULD BE.
IT'S VICKI VALE I LOVE... EVEN JULIA... ANYONE BUT... BUT HER.
AND YET... AND YET...
WHY MUST THE NIGHT BE SO CONFUSING?
WHY MUST IT FORM THE DIVISION BETWEEN WHAT I AM AND WHAT I CAN'T RESIST?
14

NO MATTER--I'M THE BATMAN NOW, ABLE TO SEE CLEARLY IN THE DARK, AND IT'S MY DUTY TO PURSUE CRIMINALS...
...IN WHATEVER FORM THEY MAY TAKE.
AND HE STRIDES INTO BLACKNESS, A PART OF HIM KNOWING THE RATIONALIZATION IS A LIE--YET THE NIGHT IS NO LONGER CONFUSING.
ANTON...
MY LOVE...
...GONE...
NOCTURNA.
IT'S TIME TO TALK-- ABOUT MURDER.
THE BATMAN.
THERE'S NOTHING TO BE SAID. IT'S DONE. HE'S GONE. I WEEP.
WHO'S GONE? THE VICTIM OR THE MURDERER?
BOTH... ALTHOUGH IT IS FOR THE MURDERER, AND HIS CRIME, THAT I WEEP...
15

BREATHE DEEPLY, BATMAN... INHALE THE NIGHT... AND FEEL THE GHOST OF WHAT I HAVE LOST...
YOUR.. YOUR SCENT-- A DRUG?
CALL IT WHAT YOU WILL... BUT FEEL IT FOR WHAT IT IS.
BUT... YOU WEAR IT ALL THE TIME... YOU DRUG YOURSELF?
I WEAR IT IN THE HOURS OF DARKNESS... WHEN I AM IMMUNE TO ITS SPELL, BOUND IN THE EMBRACE OF A DEEPER INTOXICATION...
SHARE IT WITH ME NOW, BATMAN... IN MY TIME OF NEED... WHEN MY BELOVED DARKNESS SEEMS BLACK INDEED, NO LONGER THE SOOTHING MANTLE IT ONCE WAS...
YOU'RE A CRIMINAL, NOCTURNA--AND YOU'D TRY TO SEDUCE ME WITH YOUR MELANCHOLY NEEDS?
I AM A THIEF, YES. BUT I HARM NO ONE AND FROM WHOM HAVE I STOLEN?
ONLY THOSE WHO ARE LIKE ME IN EVERY WAY...
...EXCEPT IN THEIR BLIND LACK OF LOVE FOR THE NIGHT.
I DON'T BUY SUCH RATIONALIZATIONS
I ASK YOU TO BUY NOTHING, BATMAN--I ASK YOU ONLY TO TAKE...
TAKE AND TASTE DANGEROUSLY OF OUR MUTUAL LOVE FOR THE NIGHT...
HE CANNOT RESIST; HER LIPS DRAW NEAR...
16

BUT BEFORE THEY CAN TOUCH--
FWZZZ
ANTON--!
NO, NOCTURNA-- MERELY THE GHOST OF ANTON...
YOU SEE, BATMAN, I HAVE BEEN SLAIN BY NOCTURNA HERSELF...
...BUT SINCE MY LOVE FOR HER CANNOT DIE, I WILL PERMIT NO ONE ELSE TO TASTE THAT LOVE...
STILL GROGGY--!
...AND SO YOU MUST ALSO BECOME A GHOST-- JUST AS NIGHTSHADE DID...
...AND JOIN US BOTH IN HELL!
17

TWO PIECES OF LIVING DARKNESS CURVED FROM THE NIGHT, THEY TUMBLE FROM GLOOM INTO GLARE...
...AND WITH EACH MOVE OF ABRUPT VIOLENCE, THE BATMAN'S MIND REELS--
--HIS VISION FLASHING FROM PURPLE TO SCARLET, AFTER CROSSING THE TERRAIN OF BLACKNESS BETWEEN.
IT IS THE MOMENTS OF BLACKNESS WHICH ALMOST KILL HIM, TIME AND DARK TIME AGAIN, EVEN AS ELEGANCE IS TRASHED.
WHAT HAVE I DONE?
WHAT HAVE I CREATED?
WHAT HAVE I DESTROYED?

HE FIGHTS THE SHADOW AS BEST HE CAN...
CHUD
...DEFENSIVELY, FOR THE MOST PART...
WHUMP
..LACKING THE WITS TO DO LITTLE MORE THAN PROTECT HIS HEAD...
KEE-SH
STRIKING BACK WHEN HE CAN...
SHORK
...AND PAYING FOR IT EVERY TIME.

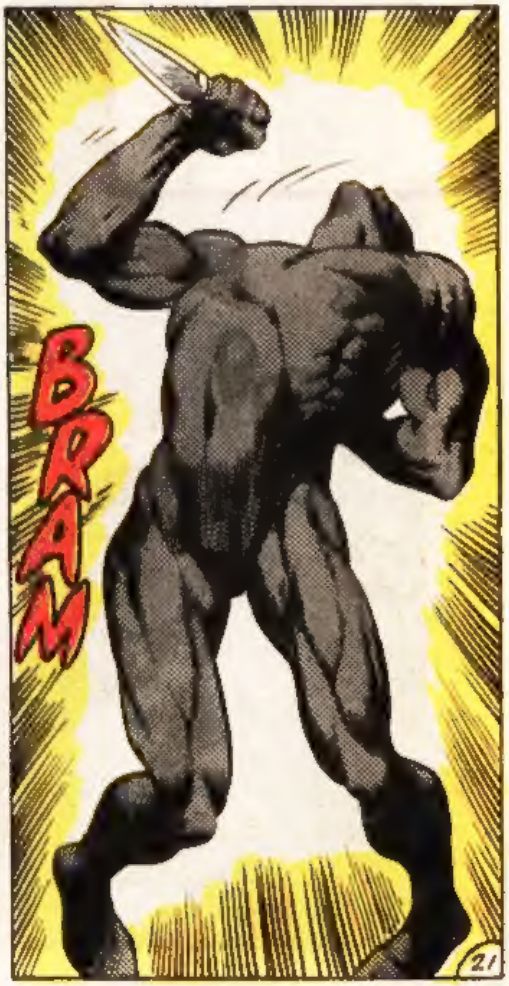
THROUGH A STORM OF LUXURY TURNED TO SHARDS, THE PINWHEEL OF PURPLE, BLACK, AND SCARLET SPINS BACK OUT ONTO THE BALCONY...
...THENCE INTO THE NIGHT ITSELF...
20

... DOWN ONTO THE RUDE SHOCK OF LOWER ROOFTOPS.

AND WHEN THE FALL IS COMPLETE...

... THE PURPLE IS GONE...
... AND GONE, TOO, IS THE SCARLET.

ALL THAT REMAINS... IS THE BLACK.


BRAM
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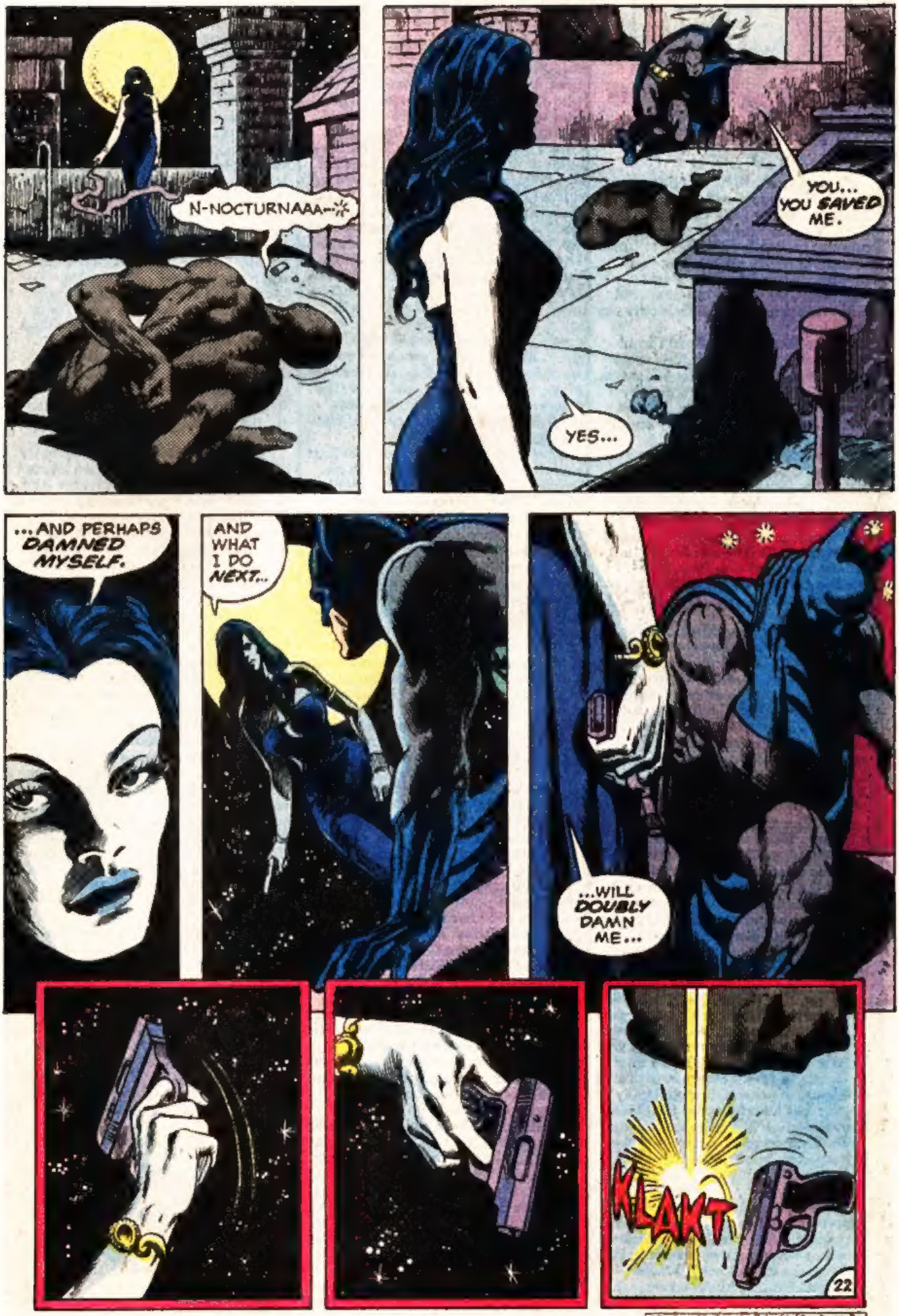

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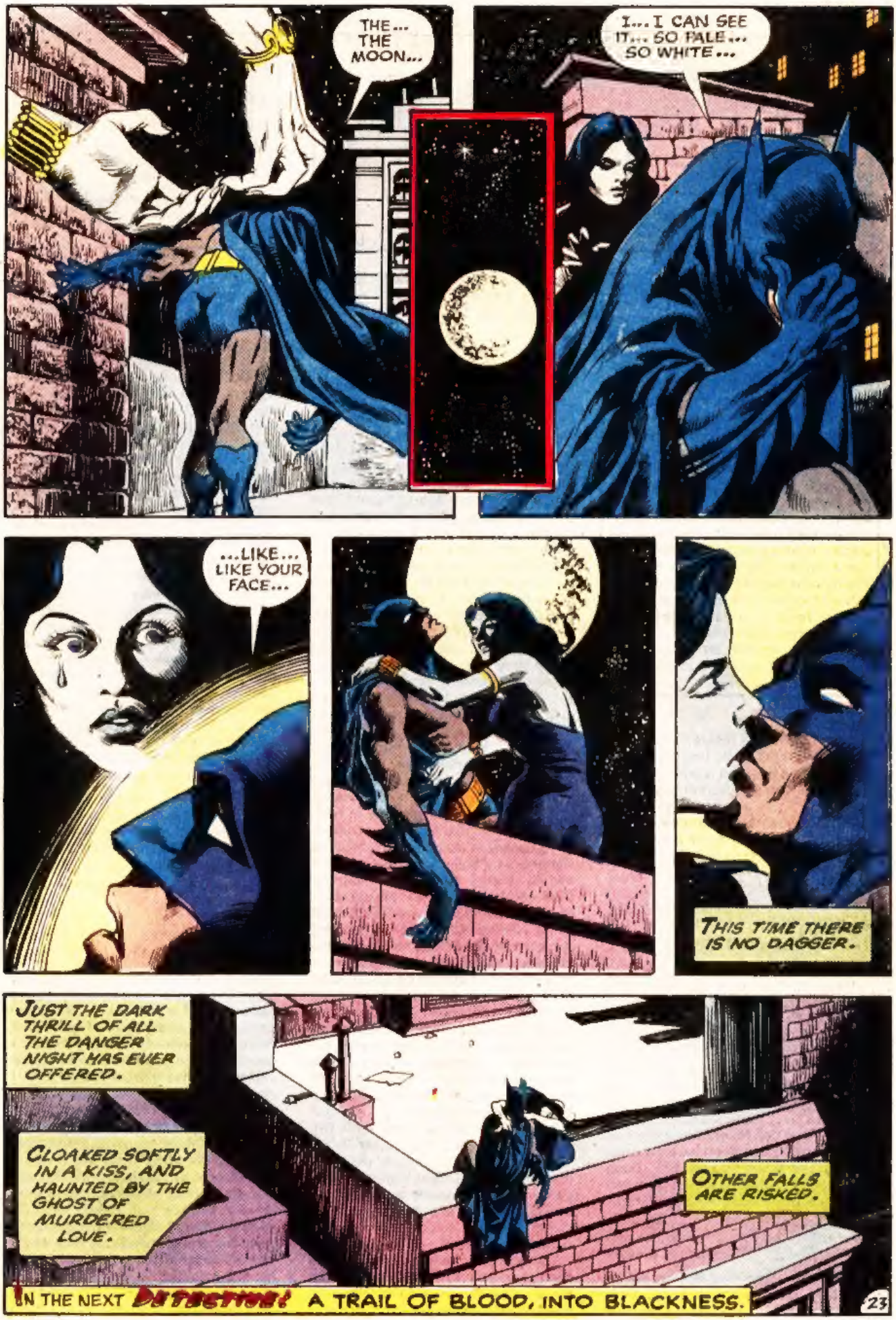
THE... THE MOON...
I... I CAN SEE IT... SO PALE... SO WHITE...
...LIKE... LIKE YOUR FACE...
THIS TIME THERE IS NO DAGGER.
JUST THE DARK THRILL OF ALL THE DANGER NIGHT HAS EVER OFFERED.
CLOAKED SOFTLY IN A KISS, AND HAUNTED BY THE GHOST OF MURDERED LOVE.
OTHER FALLS ARE RISKED.
IN THE NEXT DETECTIVE! A TRAIL OF BLOOD, INTO BLACKNESS.
23